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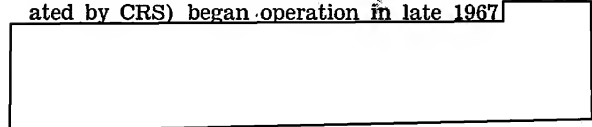
This document provides the production office analyst with a guide to the understanding and effective use of the current index to the CIA classified document collection. It explains what documents are indexed, how they are indexed, how to ask for a document search, how to obtain the assistance of CRS personnel in a search and how the retrieval process works.

Understanding this index/retrieval process can make the work of the analyst more efficient—that is, easier, faster and more accurate. The index/ retrieval system is a valuable tool when properly used; the production analyst will develop proper and skillful use of the system through practice.

WHAT IS AEGIS?

AEGIS is a document retrieval system operated by the Central Reference Service (CRS) of the Central Intelligence Agency. Essentially it provides a computer-based index to a very large collection of intelligence documents produced, or received by the Agency. This particular system (one of several operated by CRS) began operation in late 1967

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SCOPE OF THE SYSTEM

The AEGIS system provides fairly comprehensive coverage of intelligence documents issued by CIA, DoD, DIA, Army, Navy, Air Force, NSA, Department of State, NPIC, and other major intelligence sources of the United States

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Both collateral intelligence and special controlled documents are included, and all areas of the world are covered. Open literature, non-CIA cables, FBIS reporting and ground photography are included on a selective basis only.

An AEGIS search may be requested by any employee of CIA who has a legitimate need for a subject search of this type.

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HOW DOCUMENTS ARE INDEXED

To describe the subject matter of a document, a CRS analyst may use three distinct types of indexing terms:

1. *Subject Codes.* These are fairly broad subject indicators selected from a special list of about 250 six-digit codes. For example, 637.200 represents "agri-

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cultural chemicals," 691.100 represents "air-to-air missiles," and 133.000 represents "treaties and agreements."

2. *Area Codes.* These geographical codes, as specified by the Content Control Code of the U.S. Intelligence Board, are assigned by the indexer to represent the area(s) covered by a document. Each country is represented by a three-character alphabetical code (trigraph). For example, HMX represents Mexico. China and the Soviet Union are further subdivided to the level of provinces and oblasts respectively, and specific place names are used where they are appropriate.

3. *Keywords.* A word or phrase occurring in the title of the document that is a good indicator of its subject matter may be marked as a "keyword" by the indexer. This permits the word or phrase to be searched and will allow the document to be retrieved in a search in which this keyword is used. If the document title is not particularly indicative of its content, the indexer may "expand" the title by adding additional descriptive keywords. These added keywords, which can also be searched upon, will usually be words occurring in the full text of the document.

The AEGIS indexing may best be illustrated by means of a simple example:

"Weekly Summary of Events" [*Arrests* and the *Muslim Brotherhood; NF* plans to take over *trade unions;* CHICOM *medical team* arrives in So. Yemen]

Subject Codes		Area Codes
123.000	DAD	
112.600	DAD	
111.000	DAD	
112.200	DAD	
209.000	DAD CCC	

The original title of the above document, which is not indicative of its subject matter, has been con-

siderably expanded by the indexer (description within brackets) and some of the added words or phrases (italicized in the above example) have been marked as keywords, allowing them to be searched in the future. The subject codes assigned represent, in the order listed above, Internal Security, Religious Organizations, Political Parties, Labor Organizations and Health and Welfare. The area code DAD (South Yemen) applies to all of these subject codes while the area code CCC (Communist China) applies only to 209.000 (Health and Welfare).

The full AEGIS record for a document, stored in machine-readable form and searchable by computer, comprises a full bibliographic description (title, issuing agency, date, report number, security classification, and dissemination restrictions) and all the subject codes, area codes and keywords assigned to it by the indexer. The amount of detail used in the indexing of a document is dependent upon its seeming importance or the degree of current interest in the subject or area covered.

HOW AEGIS SEARCHES ARE CONDUCTED

When you approach the Central Reference Service with a request for information suitable for AEGIS processing, a CRS area analyst will prepare a strategy
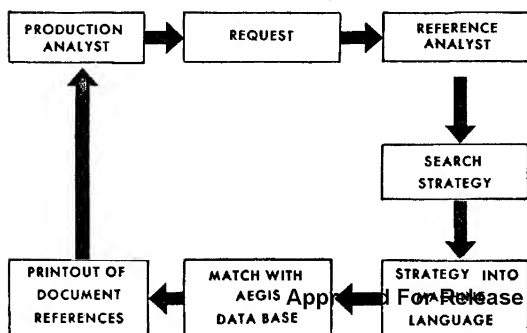
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designed to retrieve references to documents that are relevant to the subject of your research.

The search strategy is a formal specification designed to retrieve documents likely to satisfy your information need; it is composed of logical combinations of area codes, subject codes and keywords. Suppose, for example, you are seeking references on the subject of "civil air service into and out of Cuba," Here we are looking for documents that are likely to have been indexed under ICU (Cuba) and also under 430.000 (Air Transportation). In addition, however, you are only concerned with *civil* aviation. The search may be further restricted by the use of keywords indicating the civil aspect (e.g., CIVIL, CIVAIR or the names of particular carriers). The final strategy adopted may read:

430 *and* ICU *and* CIVIL or CIVAIR or CUBANA or AIR SPAIN (etc.)

When the above strategy has been reduced to machine-readable form, it is matched by computer against the complete AEGIS file of indexed citations. When a citation matches the strategy (i.e., has been indexed under 430, ICU and at least one of the required keywords), it is printed out. The above strategy involves the use of subject codes, area codes and keywords. Under other conditions a search may be made on fewer elements (e.g., area code and keywords only). The AEGIS request cycle works as follows:

```
PRODUCTION          REQUEST          REFERENCE
ANALYST                              ANALYST
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```
                                    SEARCH
                                    STRATEGY
```

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PRINTOUT OF       MATCH WITH      STRATEGY INTO
DOCUMENT          AEGIS           LANGUAGE
REFERENCES        DATA BASE
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THE AEGIS OUTPUT

The output of an AEGIS search is a machine-generated printout of references to all documents, contained in the data base, that bear the index terms specified in the search strategy. Twenty printout arrangements are possible, including arrangements by document number, country, subject code or keyword. The CRS analyst will specify the arrangement that appears best suited to your purpose. Below is a short sample from such a printout, arranged by document number:

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Note that the printout contains report number (by which the full document may be requested from the Document Services Branch of the Central Reference Service) and full title of the document, including any title expansion made by the indexer.

Because of the difficulties in coding everything in intelligence documents precisely, a machine printout may contain some references that are not directly relevant to your requirements. However, the printout provides sufficient information for you to decide which documents are probably relevant and there-

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fore worth requesting for examination. Alternatively, at your request, the CRS area analyst will mark the printout to indicate the references most likely to be of use to you.

After examining the search results, you may want to modify your original request, either by making it more precise or by expanding its scope. This will allow a second search to be conducted, which might yield more useful results than were obtained initially.

RESPONSE TIME

The average elapsed time from submission of an AEGIS request to receipt of a printout of references is one to two days. Faster response, through special handling, is possible for critical requests with very stringent time requirements.

REQUESTS SUITABLE FOR AEGIS

The system is sufficiently flexible to be able to handle a wide range of subject-oriented requests from very broad searches of the type required for the National Intelligence Survey (e.g., everything on the population of Ceylon) to highly specific requests relating to a particular event, group, or object (e.g., information on "the 12th Resolution of COSVN" or on a shipment of trucks carried by a particular vessel to a particular destination).

Scientific, political, economic, military, geographic and social information is included in the system. Among the types of search that can be con-

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ducted are those involving two or more countries (e.g., relations between Israel and Communist China; trade between France and Libya) and those involving a particular town, river or other geographic entity (e.g., information on the Pan-African Cultural Festival held in Algiers, July 20-August 1, 1969).

It is also possible to limit the scope of a search by date of document, source of document, type of document, security level or dissemination restrictions.

QUALITY OF REQUESTS

If you wish to receive a useful response from AEGIS, it is very important that the request you make should accurately describe your actual information requirement. The system cannot guess what you are looking for and is unlikely to respond effectively to vague or deliberately obscure requests. The more precise the statement of your request, and the more care you take in describing your need to the CRS area analyst, the more useful the results are likely to be.

Be as specific as possible in your request. For example, do not ask for "tribal structure in Tanzania" if only one tribe is of interest. If you are looking for information on the Bedouin Strike Force, ask specifically for this and do not generalize to "Jordanian internal security." AEGIS, like any other information retrieval system, can only look for what you ask it to look for.

HOW TO REQUEST AN AEGIS SEARCH

The AEGIS system is operated by the Information Services Group of the Central Reference Service, which is divided into five area divisions:

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USSR Division, Room 1H46 Hq.,
Far East/Pacific Division, Room 1H18 Hq.,
Near East/Africa Division, Room 1G23 Hq.,
Europe Division, Room 1G81 Hq.,
Western Hemisphere Division, Room 1H39 Hq.

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Contact the appropriate area division when the need for an AEGIS search arises. You will be assisted by an analyst specializing in the particular country involved in your request. For multi-area or worldwide topics, the analyst will coordinate with other area divisions.

OTHER CRS RESOURCES

The AEGIS system is only one of many information sources provided by the Central Reference Service. A document dissemination service, a document on-demand delivery service, biographic intelligence and reference services, and installation files are also available. The CIA Library offers standard reference and loan services. An earlier retrieval system permits searching of intelligence documents pre-dating AEGIS. For further details on all CRS services, please contact the appropriate area division.

You are encouraged to discuss all of your information needs with a member of the CRS staff. He will assist you by exploiting any of the systems that appear most appropriate to your requirements.

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